



Senate

File No. 851

General Assembly

January Session, 2001

(Reprint of File No. 506)

Substitute Senate Bill No. 534
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedules "B" and "C"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
June 1, 2001

AN ACT CONCERNING EYE EXAMINATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) Each local and regional board of education shall
2 require each child to have an eye examination, in accordance with the
3 guidelines of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American
4 Optometric Association or the American Academy of Pediatrics, prior
5 to enrolling in an elementary school under its jurisdiction for first
6 grade or a higher grade. If a child who is required to have an eye
7 examination fails to obtain such examination, the local or regional
8 board of education may deny continued attendance in a public
9 elementary school to such child.

10 Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 10-206 of the general statutes is
11 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

12 (b) Each local or regional board of education shall require each child
13 to have a health assessment prior to public school enrollment. The
14 assessment shall include: (1) A physical examination which shall

15 include hematocrit or hemoglobin tests, height, weight and blood
16 pressure; (2) an updating of immunizations as required under section
17 10-204a, provided a registered nurse may only update said
18 immunizations pursuant to a written order by a physician or physician
19 assistant, licensed pursuant to chapter 370, or an advanced practice
20 registered nurse, licensed pursuant to chapter 378; (3) vision, except for
21 a child enrolling in an elementary school, hearing, speech and gross
22 dental screenings; and (4) such other information, including health and
23 developmental history, as the physician feels is necessary and
24 appropriate. The assessment shall also include tests for tuberculosis,
25 sickle cell anemia or Cooley's anemia and tests for lead levels in the
26 blood where the local or regional board of education determines after
27 consultation with the school medical advisor and the local health
28 department, or in the case of a regional board of education, each local
29 health department, that such tests are necessary, provided a registered
30 nurse may only perform said tests pursuant to the written order of a
31 physician or physician assistant, licensed pursuant to chapter 370, or
32 an advanced practice registered nurse, licensed pursuant to chapter
33 378.

34 Sec. 3. Section 10-208 of the general statutes is repealed and the
35 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

36 No provision of section 10-206, [or] 10-214 or section 1 of this act,
37 shall be construed to require any pupil to undergo a physical or
38 medical examination or treatment, or to be compelled to receive
39 medical instruction, if the parent or legal guardian of such pupil or the
40 pupil, if such pupil is an emancipated minor or is eighteen years of age
41 or older, in writing, notifies the teacher or principal or other person in
42 charge of such pupil that such parent or guardian or pupil objects, on
43 religious grounds, to such physical or medical examination or
44 treatment or medical instruction.

45 Sec. 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2002.

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Affected Agencies: Department of Education

Municipal Impact: See Explanation Below

Explanation**Municipal Impact:**

The bill's expansion of health assessments with regard to eye examinations will result in an increase in the workload of health personnel within local and regional school districts. It is not anticipated that this workload increase will result in the need for additional personnel but may result in a reprioritization or elimination of current non-mandated duties.

House "B" and "C" are technical and have no fiscal impact.

OLR Amended Bill Analysis

sSB 534 (as amended by House "B" and "C")*

AN ACT CONCERNING EYE EXAMINATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires children to have an eye examination that meets the guidelines of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Optometric Association, or American Academy of Pediatrics before enrolling in public elementary school for the first or a higher grade. The new examination replaces the vision screenings currently required as part of the mandatory health assessment all students must have before enrolling in public school at any level. The bill also allows local and regional school boards to bar children from school if they have not had the required eye exam, just as they already can bar children who have not had the required health assessment.

As is the case for other pre-enrollment health assessments, the bill exempts from the required exam students whose parents have religious objections to medical examination or treatment.

*House Amendment "B" eliminates (1) an exemption from the eye exam requirement for low-income students (those eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches), (2) the application of the new requirement to children entering private elementary schools, and (3) a requirement that the exam include 11 specific types of eye tests. It adds the requirement that the exam meet American Academy of Ophthalmology or American Optometric Association guidelines and specifies that the exam is required only for students enrolling in the first or a higher elementary grade, not for those enrolling in kindergarten.

*House Amendment "C" allows required eye exams to meet American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines as an alternative to those of the American Academy of Ophthalmology or American Optometric Association.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2002

BACKGROUND

Student Health Assessments

By law, before enrolling in a public school, each student must have a health assessment performed by a legally qualified medical practitioner, registered nurse or advanced-practice registered nurse, licensed physician assistant, or the school medical advisor. The assessment must include:

1. a physical examination, including hematocrit or hemoglobin tests, height, weight, and blood pressure;
2. an update of required immunizations;
3. vision, hearing, speech, and gross dental screenings; and
4. any other information, including health and developmental history, the physician thinks necessary and appropriate.

When the local school board thinks it necessary after consulting with the school medical advisor and the local health department, the screening must also include tests for tuberculosis, sickle cell anemia or Cooley's anemia, and blood lead levels.

Legislative History

On May 9, the Senate referred the original bill (File 506) to the Public Health Committee, which reported it favorably without changes on May 16. The Senate passed the bill with Senate "A," which contained the same provisions as House "B," except for the exclusion of private school students and kindergartners from the bill's scope. The House rejected Senate "A" on May 31, 2001.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 32 Nay 0

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 21 Nay 1